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FALSE DOCTRINES

AND

FALSE TEACHERS:

HOW TO KNOW THEM, AND HOW TO TREAT THEM.

BY

WM. S. PLUMER.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
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FALSE DOCTRINES AND FALSE TEACHERS.

LATE in life the Apostle of the circumcision said to his Christian friends: "There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Pet. ii: 1. His beloved brother, the Apostle of the Gentiles, gave a like warning: "I know that, after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts xx: 29, 30.

With such warnings from God's Word, we should not be surprised to find that in every age the Church of God has been tried by the arts and errors of men, who concerning the faith were reprobate. We should expect such things, and watch, and stand firm, and

not be shaken. There have always been 'false brethren,' and 'false teachers,' as there were formerly 'false apostles,' 'false prophets,' and even 'false Christs.'

False teachers are those who teach false doctrine. Grievous wolves are they who make havoc of the flock of Christ. Such often gain advantage over weak but good men by teaching with zeal and clearness some important truths. These are intended to put a coat of sugar over the poisonous pills they administer. Modern Perfectionists prate much about holiness, and thus persuade men that their system cannot be bad, while yet they are sapping the very foundations of good morals. Antinomians often speak with power of the richness and freeness and sovereignty of Divine grace; and yet all the while, they are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and making Christ the minister of sin. Men who exalt human nature, commonly urge that they are trying to give correct notions of the dignity of man, and to awaken a deep sense of responsibility. By uttering much truth, men hope that their false doctrines will pass unsuspected. Let no man be

deceived. The nature of falsehood is not changed by mingling it with truth. Counterfeit money often has good notes mingled with it.

Others are led away by false teachers, because, for a while, they maintain good morals and seem to manifest great devoutness of mind. Of Pelagius, Augustine testifies that he "always maintained a character of fair and decent morals," and that, until late in life, when he began to teach his fatal errors, "his reputation for serious piety had been great in the churches," through which he had extensively traveled. The amount of zeal displayed by false teachers is sometimes prodigious. They compass sea and land to make one proselyte. They often put to shame the lukewarmness of some who hold the truth. Their devoutness sometimes seems astonishing. In them Satan seems transformed into an angel of light. I have never seen more seeming warmth in religious worship than among some who deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost. They are both sanctimonious and fanatical. They have fire, but it is wild fire. Let us follow no

teacher merely because he is moral, zealous, and apparently devout.

It is God's plan that "there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. xi: 19. The Scriptures make it no less clear that our duty requires us to "try the spirits whether they are of God." 1 John v: 1. Let us then learn the marks of false teachers. What does history say of them? In all ages they are much alike.

I. *They exercise much cunning and artifice in spreading their false doctrines.* Peter said they should "privily bring in damnable heresies." And Paul warns the Ephesians that they "henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the *sleight* of men, and *cunning craftiness*, whereby they *lie in wait to deceive*." Eph. iv: 14. In his Church History (Vol. 2, p. 380) Joseph Milner says that "insidiousness seems to be a common character of heresy. A free, and open, and consistent support of what is believed to be true, is as common a mark of genuine orthodoxy." Arius himself, in the presence of Constantine, not only subscribed the decrees of the

Nicene Council, but actually swore that he believed them; and his party justified him in so doing, and the next day took him in triumph through the city. But this was the last day of his life. He was suddenly and awfully called to his last account. The same cunning is almost invariably manifested by false teachers the world over. They hold back their offensive sentiments, or teach them only to the initiated, until they get a footing, and then they pour them into the ears of all.

II. *False teachers commonly promise much more than they perform.* Thus an inspired Apostle says of them: "When they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter ii: 18, 19. In Christ's day, the Pharisees doubtless did the same; but when they had made a proselyte, they taught him to be twofold more the child of hell than themselves. Most of our modern errorists propose and promise by their speculations to

remove prejudices against the Gospel, to make plain its mysteries, and to set men free from needless restraints and afflicting scruples. They often proclaim that the prevalence of their opinions would bring halcyon days to the world. But so far as mankind embrace their views, they are no better. The promised liberty turns out to be licentiousness. The clearing up of difficulties consists in denying the doctrines of the Gospel, and so they or their disciples are soon found sympathising with infidels or profane men.

III. *False teachers are commonly boastful.* They exalt themselves in extravagant terms, and decry opposers in severe language. So it was in the days of Paul. The false teachers actually claimed to be "apostles." They "gloried," or vainly and extravagantly exulted. They decried Paul, asserting that his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible. They admitted that he wrote well, but claimed that they excelled in oratory and philosophy. There was not a spark of genuine modesty about them. So in modern times, if a cringing spirit and base flattery will answer a purpose, they will be resorted to; yet when another course seems

admissible, their mouths are filled with vain conceits. They boast of their numbers, talents, wealth and sufferings as a body. They boast of converts never made, of charities never bestowed, of good never done, of works never accomplished. In this respect, they have a close resemblance to those pests of society—dealers in quack medicines.

IV. *The very same people at times display fierceness and bitterness.* This is quite consistent with traits already noticed. This uniform result is the fruit of unsanctified affections. In the Church of Scotland, the loose Moderates have long shown their bad tempers and been "fierce for moderation." In the days of Micah, the false prophets bore the same mark. They "make my people to err, and bite with the teeth, and cry peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him." Micah iii: 5. Here is the whole story: They lead souls astray. That is their trade. Then they are fierce and bite with their teeth. Then they set up a loud and idle pretense of great love of peace. But they brook no opposition; and they admit of no neutrality. They propose war against him that puts not

into their mouth. This was the course of the Arians. They agitated, and intimidated many, and for a while had things very much their own way. Yet one great man stood firm and unterrified. Against him they were as fierce as fiends. Milner (Vol. 2, pp. 79, 81) says, they "endeavored to extort evidence against him by drawn swords, whips, clubs, and all engines of cruelty. * * * They deposed him from his bishoprick. * * * The basest crimes were charged upon Athanasius, rebellion, oppression, rape, and murder." He was charged with the murder of Arsenius, a Meletian bishop; and a human hand was shown, which was said to be that of the murdered man. Arsenius was in the plot himself, but was at last detected and brought forth on the day of trial, and the guilty accusers were confounded when they saw him. Their hatred of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was the cause of this deceit and violence. In the days of our Savior, false teachers bore the same marks. Nothing was more settled in the theology of the Jews than this, that none but God could work a miracle, and that Jehovah would not lend His omnipotent power to establish a lie.

Yet when our Lord did great wonders, His enemies said He had a devil and was mad, and that He wrought miracles by the power of Beelzebub. They never rested till they got His blood. A bad woman and a depraved ecclesiastic have become proverbially infamous for their horrible malignity. Lying, slander, abuse, any means that will answer their purpose, false teachers often resort to, or connive at in others, if they seem to promise victory. It has always been so. Paul tells us of some that would *not endure sound doctrine.* They had no patience with it or its friends.

V. *False teachers love to make dupes of unstable, ill-informed females and young persons.* Paul well says: "Of this sort are they, which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins." 2. Tim. iii: 6. "Children in understanding" are fine subjects for cunning heretical teachers. The following are among the rules of the Jesuits: "In order to induce rich widows to be liberal to the Society, they must be provided with confessors, who may urge their remaining unmarried, by assuring them that they will thereby secure their own salvation, and

effectually escape the pains of purgatory. That the widow may dispose of her property to the Society, she must be told of those who have devoted themselves to the service of God, and be led to expect canonization from the court of Rome. The preceptors must not chastise or keep in subjection young men of good genius, agreeable persons and noble families, like their other pupils. They must be won by presents and other privileges peculiar to their age; but on other occasions, especially in exhortations, they must be terrified with threats of eternal punishment, unless they obey the heavenly invitation of joining the Society." Here we have the scheme in full relief. Others may not be so systematic or so successful; but something of the sort is generally practiced by adepts in propagating false doctrine.

VI. *It has long been noticed that notwithstanding their boastings, false teachers are commonly cowards.* Severely tested, they have no moral courage. They shrink from enduring persecution, and grow pale at thoughts of martyrdom. The exceptions to this statement are rare. Indeed, false teachers often flee when no man pursueth. Very

few of them hold that their doctrines are worth dying for. In this they are right. So we often find them, like infidels, changing according to the society they are in. If Arius must swear to a creed which he does not believe, or lose his standing with the emperor and the public, he will take the false oath. Heretical teachers are famous for crying out, bigotry, persecution, if you will not own them as brethren. Sin and error never have true courage.

VII. *False teachers are sometimes for a season very successful.* This is not always so; but it is often so. They wish to "draw disciples after them," and they have their wish. "Many follow their pernicious ways." This is not surprising. Our Lord said: "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, the elect." Mark xiii: 22. In Deut. xiii: 1–5, Moses admits that lying prophets might do some wonderful things. There are not only true miracles, but, also, "lying wonders." 2 Thess. ii: 9. These and other arts have their effect. The Arians once had the emperor and three-fourths of the clergy on their side. Pelagius, at one time,

seemed to have corrupted vast numbers. Many more seemed ready to apologize for his course. Corrupt doctrine is agreeable to the depraved heart of man. There never was a doctrine so abominable, that it did not suit the evil inclinations of many miserable men.

VIII. *Sooner or later the folly of false teachers shall be manifest.* For a while Jannes and Jambres seemed to succeed as well as Moses and Aaron; but on the plague of the lice, they could do nothing, and said to Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God." For a considerable time the priests of Baal had things as they liked, but at last the test was too severe, and away went their courage and their friends. It will at last be seen who loves and who hates the truth. Moses gives it as a test of false doctrine, that its tendency is to withdraw men from the fear and service of God. Peter gives another like it. It leads men to "deny the Lord that bought them." "The triumph of the wicked is short," always confined to this world, sometimes to a few centuries, often to a few years. Therefore all our modern errorists deny their founders and prototypes. We have, in this

day, Pelagians, Sabellians, Socinians, Arians, and Apollinarians, but all of them are averse to the name, and pray that their doctrines may be received, not as the old loathsome heresies, which they really are, but as nice and important improvements in theology.

The character of a finished propagator of false doctrine may be thus sketched. He is cunning, artful and politic, but not wise. He is plausible and ready to flatter, but he has no real benevolence. At times, he has a show of modesty, but no real humanity. He is never candid, open, and true. He talks very much according to the company he is in. In his heart, he hates scriptural holiness and some of the truths that lead to it; yet at times, he may have an air of sanctimoniousness. When he dares, he can scoff, and scowl, and show malice like any other wicked man. His artifices better suit the silly than the judicious, and so he chiefly addresses the unlearned and the unstable. At times, he probably blusters a good deal, but he has none of the true courage of the Apostles. He is not ready to suffer the loss of all things for the truth. It is easy for providence to lead such men away to secular pursuits. Our

country has seen four men, preachers of false doctrine in one city, led away to other pursuits more congenial to their carnal tastes. Law, medicine, trade, politics, literary pursuits are more congenial to such than preaching and praying. Often false teachers have an unhonored old age. After death, none rise up to call them blessed. They never saved a soul from the error of its ways. Sometimes the death of such is attended with many painful circumstances. They never bear any testimony for God. Their dying chamber is never on the verge of heaven. Sometimes they hug their delusions to the last, and never awake to a just view of their own case till the stamp of eternity and the seal of immutability are placed upon their character, and they are shoved up into the presence of God, and begin the doleful and endless wail of lamentation over a life misspent and opportunities of salvation lost forever.

Here arises a great practical question: How shall we treat false teachers when they arise? The answer to this question needs not to be long.

1. So soon as we know their character, it is our duty to refuse to hear them or to read their books. Never was more wholesome or salutary advice given than that of Solomon: "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Prov. xix: 27. In answer to a question from a corrupt writer, John Newton excused himself for not having read his book, by saying: "If a neighbor sends me a joint of meat, and I find one slice tainted, I am not bound to eat it at all." Human nature is in most cases too weak to bear a long and voluntary subjection to evil influences without very ill effects. Were men wholly without sin, it would grieve them to be compelled to listen to lies and to slanders on God's truth and government. The less pain such things give us the more dangerous they are. All pleas for giving our ears to false teachers are in the teeth of the good petition: "Lead us not into temptation."

2. If a false teacher is already in an orthodox Church, it is right to disown him, and cast him out, not with maledictions, but with sorrow and prayer and firmness. So teaches Paul: "I would that they which trouble you

were even cut off." Again: "An heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." Gal. v: 12; Titus iii: 10. The Church is always greatly polluted, when she refuses to disown a blatant teacher of false doctrine.

3. False teachers must also be firmly and meekly resisted in all their attempts to lead men astray. When even Peter was betrayed into dissimulation concerning false doctrines, Paul withstood him to the face, and rebuked him sharply. Jude "exhorted" his brethren "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," verse 3. He who is willing to risk nothing for Christ, does not love Christ. He who, being duly called to defend the truth, declines to do so, does not love the truth. That is a good saying, and none the worse for being old: "Dost thou love controversy? suspect thy charity. Dost thou abhor controversy? suspect thy Christianity."

4. While the Scriptures call on us to feed the hungry and to be kind to the poor, they forbid us to hold such social intercourse with false teachers, as implies sympathy with them or connivance at their wicked teachings. Thus the loving and blessed John says: "If there come any unto you and bring not this

doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11. This is conclusive. The meaning is, not that we should not relieve their bodily wants, feed them or shelter them when in distress, but that we should not show them those hospitalities, which the churches usually extend to Christ's ministers. The same John fled the baths when he found a noted heretic in them, saying, "Let us flee lest the bath fall, while an enemy of truth is within."

5. In dealing with corrupt teachers, it is peculiarly important not to be intimidated by them. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." "Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread: and He shall be for a sanctuary." Prov. xxix: 25; Isaiah viii: 13, 14. Truth is like the spear of Ithuriel. No falsehood can endure its touch. The sword of the Spirit is two-edged and very sharp. At the Synod of Nice, A. D., 325, before the business began, there appeared in the assembly certain Gentile philosophers, "some with a design to satisfy their curiosity concerning Christianity, others wishing to involve the Christians in a cloud of verbal subtleties, and to enjoy the mutual con-

tradictions of the followers of Christ. One of them distinguished himself above the rest by the power and arrogancy of his pretensions, and derided the clergy as ignorant and illiterate. On this occasion, an old Christian who had suffered with magnanimous constancy during the late persecutions, though unacquainted with logical forms, undertook to contend with the philosopher. Those who were more anxious to gratify curiosity than to investigate truth, endeavored to raise a laugh at the old man's expense; while serious spirits were distressed to see a contest apparently so unequal. Respect for the man, however, induced them to permit him to engage. And he immediately addressed the philosopher in these terms: "Hear, philosopher, in the name of Jesus Christ. There is one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, who made all things by the power of His Word, and confirmed them by the holiness of His Spirit. This Word, whom we call the Son of God, compassionating the sons of men involved in error and wickedness, chose to be born of a woman, to converse with men, and to die for them; and he will come again, the Judge of

all things which men have done in the body; that these things are so, we believe in simplicity; do not then labor in vain, seeking to confute things which ought to be received by faith, and investigating the manner in which these things may or may not be; but if thou believest, answer me, now that I ask thee." Struck with this plain, authoritative address, the philosopher said: "I do believe;" with pleasure owned himself vanquished, confessed that he embraced the same sentiments with the old man, and advised the other philosophers to do the same, averring that he was changed by a divine influence, and was moved by an energy which he could not explain."* Such is the power of truth when the Holy Spirit makes it efficacious. The longer a good man lives, the firmer is his confidence in the simple truths of Scripture to renew the heart, save the soul, check error, and bring glory to God.

These thoughts and the Word of God fairly conduct us to the following

CONCLUSIONS.

1. There is such a thing as truth. Truth is light. It makes manifest. It is one. It is

* Sozomen b. 1, c. xviii.

harmonious. No truth contradicts any other truth. In truth are no jars, no discords, no contradictions. Like its Author, truth is simple, eternal, immutable. It came from God, who cannot lie, cannot deceive, cannot be mistaken, cannot be overreached. As there never was a time when two and two made five, so there shall never be a time when two and two shall make less or more than four. In like manner, sin and holiness never were the same, and to all eternity shall be different. Right and wrong cannot agree, because one is conformity to truth and justice, while the other is at war with both. One is from above; the other is from beneath. Truth is the opposite of fiction, fable, falsehood.

2. All truth is equally trne; but all truth is not equally clear or equally important. The axioms of geometry are as true as the first principles of the Gospel; yet one may be happy, holy, sound, without knowing any mathematical truth whatever. But eternal life depends on our knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. John xvii: 3. In the arts and sciences, a truth may be of great value to one man, while to one of another calling or profession it is of slight value. But

all religious truth is of great price to every man. On it may depend his highest eternal well-being. We cannot give too much for truth. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Prov. xxiii: 23. The wise men of the East took a long journey to see Him who is the way, and the truth, and the life; and they acted wisely. They went on no fool's errand. Men often give too high a price for perishable things. But he who has, loves, and obeys the truth, is blessed forever.

3. No want is so appalling as to be left destitute of God's mercy and truth. All else is bearable. This is intolerable misery. Hezekiah's great desire was for peace and truth in his day. When Messiah rides prosperously, it is because of truth and meekness and righteousness. When God would pronounce a blessing on philanthropists and benefactors, He says: "Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good." Prov. xiv: 22. Nor is any people in a sadder state than when truth is fallen in the streets, for then justice standeth afar off, and equity cannot enter.

4. On the other hand, a lie is the opposite of truth. It misleads, deceives, and beguiles, just so far as it is embraced. It is the pro-

geny of the wicked-one. When men delight in lies, they curse inwardly. "He that speaketh lies shall perish." Prov. xix: 9. If any doubt God's abhorrence of lies uttered to men, let them read the awful history of Gehazi. If any doubt God's abhorrence of lies uttered to Him, let them read the story of Ananias and Sapphira. At all times and in all cases, lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Prov. xii: 22.

5. But lies, in the shape of religious error, are no less displeasing to God. They lead men astray. They make the hearts of good men sad. They afflict whom God would comfort, and comfort whom God calls to mourning. When you find a man speaking lies in hypocrisy, you may know that his conscience is seared with a hot iron. Just as sure as a man loves God's law, he hates and abhors lying. To God, nothing is more offensive than false doctrine. It is a slander on the Almighty. To the soul it is a deadly poison. It eats up the soul as a cancer eats up the flesh. "No lie is of the truth." No lie is a part of the truth. No false doctrine is a part of Christianity. Pool: "Any part of false doctrine doth so ill match and

square with the frame of divine truth, that judicious Christians may discern they are not of a piece."

6. There is such a thing as truth in opposition to error. Both Solomon and Paul speak of "Good doctrine," which is the same as "sound doctrine," so often mentioned by Paul. If a doctrine is true and sound, it is good, whether it pleases or enrages men. In Scripture, good doctrine is once called 'the doctrine of the Lord,' once 'the doctrine of God our Savior,' once 'the doctrine of the Apostles,' 'once 'the doctrine which is according to godliness,' twice 'the doctrine of Jesus,' thrice 'the doctrine of Christ.' In Scripture, good doctrine is synonymous with such terms and phrases as 'truth,' 'the truth in Christ,' 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' 'the truth of God,' and 'the Word of truth.' It is elsewhere called 'the form of sound words,' and 'sound speech that cannot be condemned.' It is just the opposite of what the Bible calls 'strange doctrines,' 'the doctrines and commandments of men,' 'the doctrines of devils,' 'damnable heresies,' 'the traditions of men,' 'lies,' 'falsehood,' 'vain deceit,' 'philosophy.' So that it is clear that

there is such a thing as *sound* doctrine and such a thing as *strange* doctrine; there is doctrine according to godliness, and there is doctrine contrary to godliness.

7. We are bound to distinguish the true and the false in religious doctrine. The Scripture requires us to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good, and to try teachers by their doctrine. 1 Thess. v: 21; 1 John iv: 1. This can be done. We can know the truth. The doctrine of the Pharisees and the doctrine of the Sadducees never did agree with the doctrines of Christ. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes subverted the doctrines of the Apostles. Light and darkness are not more opposite than truth and error. Nutritious food and deadly poison may look alike, but they can be, and they must be, distinguished.

8. Good doctrine is not the product of earth. Man is not its author. Human wit and genius may do many things, but all saving truth is heaven-born. Christ said, "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me." John vii: 16. If all men approved any thing, that would avail nothing, unless God sanctioned it. So that good doctrine is always

according to Scripture, and *so* it is the word of God. Christ and his Apostles appealed to the Scriptures and reasoned out of them.

9. We cannot in the least depart from sound doctrine without affecting our views of God, His nature, government, or worship. It is necessary to believe that man is a lost sinner, in order to believe that the provisions of the Gospel are not nugatory. If men hold false doctrine, it is because they have not received the love of the truth, and so are swayed by pride, or prejudice, or some want of right affections.

10. Our salvation depends upon our belief of the truth of God. "Of His own will, begat He us with the word of truth;" "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," are but mere samples of what God has spoken on this subject. Error may lead to superstition, or to sanctimoniousness, but it never leads to holiness. False doctrine dishonors God at every step. It defiles the conscience, corrupts the heart, bewitches the mind and destroys the soul. Truth is in order to godliness, error to ungodliness. It is our duty to proclaim that all false doctrines,

which subvert foundation truths, bring perdition. When a man is finally given up to believe a lie, it is certain that he will be damned. 2 Thess. ii: 11, 12. Paul says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. i: 8.

11. We must not only hold the truth but hold it to the rejection of opposing error. After a fashion, the Pharisees held much truth, but they so mixed it up with error that they "made the word of God of none effect." One man in this age has sent forth the opinion that we may well believe all creeds, the more the better. For this belief, there is neither reason nor Scripture.

12. We must be valiant for the truth. We must hold it at all costs and hazards. Myriads have wisely laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. All the truth of religion now upon earth has been preserved to us by the intrepidity of confessors and the blood of martyrs. Men, whose office, station, and profession require them to stand up for the truth and fail to do so, are among the greatest enemies of God and man. Jer. ix: 3.

13. Nor need we be disturbed because some oppose all these views, and rail at those who insist upon sound doctrine. The intent of God, in teaching us the truth, is that we might know, love, and embrace it, and be saved by it. Scorn, hard names, and reviling speeches cannot make truth to be a lie or a fiction. At last God's Spirit will bring all the redeemed "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. iv: 13. Then where will the scorners be?

14. Some say that they receive all the facts of Scripture, but in their philosophy differ with the people of God. In the end, such are often found to deny the facts. If men set aside the federal headship of Adam, or original sin, or native depravity, or regeneration by the power of God, or a vicarious atonement, or justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, they deny great facts taught in God's word. Such do not speak candidly, when they say they merely differ from others in their philosophy.

15. Others say, good practice is all we regard; we care nothing for creeds. But

have such forgotten that "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he"? Prov. xxiii: 7. The world furnishes no case of a man being betted than his principles. Who would trust a man who believed it was right to lie, and steal, and murder?

16. Nor must we shrink from a just exposure of false doctrine and a faithful vindication of the truth. The pious and amiable John Newton made it a rule never to attack error, nor warn his people against it. He said: "The best method of defeating heresy is by establishing the truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with tares; now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defeat his attempts." Surely the truth ought to be abundantly set forth. But this is not sufficient. The human mind is not like a bushel. It may learn much truth and yet go after folly. The effect of Mr. Newton's practice was unhappy. He was hardly dead till many of his people went far astray. Paul says: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. iv: 2. The more subtle, bitter, and numerous the foes of the truth are, the more fearfuless and decided should

its friends be. The life of truth is more important than the life of any man or of any theories.

17. Let us not forget that there is a spirit becoming the truth. We must receive the engrafted word with meekness; we must speak the truth in love, not in malice; we must in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Some one has said: "We might almost as well not speak the truth at all as not speak it in love." However this may be, it is clear that we distort and in a sense caricature the truth, when we bring our malignant passions to set forth God's precious truth.

18. There is also a life becoming the truth. We are fitly called upon to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things," and so to live that "the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed." 1 Tim. vi: 1; Titus ii: 10. No station, or office, or repute for sanctity can exempt a man from the law of holiness. If we have not righteousness of life, we cannot have scriptural evidences of acceptance in the Beloved. "Be ye holy, for

I am holy, saith the Lord." It is dreadful when the truth is held in unrighteousness of life.

19. Let us cultivate an honest sense of the sin of loving falsehood, and of the danger of being given over to believe a lie, or to follow blind guides. Masillon says: "Sending wicked ministers is the most terrible of the Lord's punishments. When He is not thoroughly provoked, He contents Himself with arming kings against kings and people against people; He reverses the order of the seasons; He strikes the country with barrenness; He spreads desolation, famine, and death on the earth. But when He says, in His wrath, what chastisement have I yet in reserve, and what is the last mark of mine anger that I can shew unto them, then He says: 'They which lead them shall cause then to err.'" This view of the eloquent Frenchman is supported by the Morasthite, when he says: "If a man walking in the spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people." Micah ii: 11.

20. Let no man forget that there is a rejection of truth, which makes ruin certain.

"He that believeth not shall be damned." A little error is bad; but fundamental error hinders salvation. South says: "I know it is doubted, whether a bare error in judgment can condemn; but since truths absolutely necessary are so clearly revealed, that we cannot err in them, unless we be notoriously wanting to ourselves; herein the fault of the judgment is resolved into a precedent default of the will; and so the case is put out of doubt." If men are ever delivered from the bondage of corruption, the truth must set them free. John viii: 32. And if men turning from the holy commandment and the precious truth of God to fables and falsehoods, it must be because they love a lie.

FINIS.

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